Ministry of
Education

SERVICE PLAN
2002/2003 – 2004/2005

BRITISH
COLUMBIA

Ministry of Education

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A *New Era* of Government Service

Three-year Service Plans represent an important part of the government's commitment to open and accountable government. In August 2001, the government amended the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act* to require government to table a three-year Strategic Plan and annual three-year service plans for ministries and government organizations with the provincial budget. These Plans will ensure government and its individual ministries clearly outline their goals, and enable British Columbians to hold government accountable for its decisions and actions.

The government's Three Year Strategic Plan articulates the government's vision: *British Columbia is a prosperous and just province, whose citizens achieve their potential and have confidence in the future.* It also establishes three strategic goals that are key to achieving the government's overall vision:

- A strong and vibrant provincial economy
- A supportive social infrastructure
- Safe, healthy communities and a sustainable environment

This Service Plan details the Ministry's mission and objectives, which support the government's strategic goals. The Service Plan also includes performance measures that will be used to assess the Ministry's progress in achieving its objectives. Ministry objectives and performance measures are a new initiative. In some cases, as planning progresses, performance measures will become more detailed as they are further developed.

After the end of each fiscal year, the ministry will prepare a Service Plan Report that will describe actual accomplishments for the year just completed. The Report will include a comparison of planned and actual results, from both a financial and performance measure perspective and allow the public to assess the government's performance.

In the years ahead, Service Plans and Service Plan Reports, prepared by government ministries and organizations, will become the key tool by which government will manage public resources to ensure government programs are contributing, in a measurable way, to key government priorities in an efficient and effective manner.

The government's three-year Strategic Plan and Ministry three-year Service Plans will guide the reform of the province's public services so they meet British Columbians' needs. Measures to revitalize economic prosperity and protect and renew public services will lay the groundwork for a future of new opportunity for all British Columbians.

Accountability Statement

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Ministry of Education

The 2002/03 – 2004/05 Ministry of Education Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared. The plan was developed in the context of the government's *New Era* commitments which are to be addressed by May 17, 2005. All material fiscal assumptions and policy decisions as of January 28, 2002 have been considered in preparing the plan and I am accountable for achieving the specific objectives in the plan.

Honourable Christy Clark
Minister of Education

January 30, 2002

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Minister's Accountability Statement	V
Introduction	1
Strategic Context	2
The Business of the Ministry	3
Planning Context	4
Ministry Goals	5
Consistency with Government's Priorities	10
Resource Summary	12
Appendix 1. Summary of Measures and Targets	15

Introduction

The purpose of this Service Plan is to describe how the Ministry of Education will reach the government's goal of a top-notch education system during the next three years as we embark on a *New Era* of innovation, creativity and imagination. This Service Plan outlines the Ministry's strategic direction and activities. It starts government, our education partners and the public down a new road, with the unprecedented opportunity to work together to reshape public education in the province.

We know that a high quality education system helps improve the well-being of each individual in society. It is the most important public service we can provide. We also know that higher levels of education increase job opportunities, earning potential and overall economic growth, and reduce crime rates, dependence on government financial support and use of health services.

In other words, education is the best preventive health care system and the best economic development program we've discovered. That is why we are committed to making the education system even better.

Strategic Context

The Ministry's vision is an education system that is the best in Canada. British Columbia's system already performs at high levels, which means that future improvements require continued creativity and innovation on the part of educators and administrators in order for the province to remain at the forefront of educational performance.

The system's mandate is set out in the *School Act*:

> *The purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable all learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy, democratic and pluralistic society and a prosperous and sustainable economy.*

Education plays a central part in the development of the knowledge students will need to take a full and active part in society. School boards and independent schools have a primary responsibility for students' intellectual development and a shared responsibility with families and the community for students' human, social and career development and for their development as citizens.

The Business of the Ministry

The business of the Ministry is to allocate funds for the education system, set educational standards based on the outcomes students need to achieve, monitor student performance and report the results to the public, work with schools and communities to improve student and school performance, and oversee the governance of the system as a whole. British Columbia's K-12 system serves approximately 600,000 students in public schools, approximately 58,000 independent school students and 3,300 home-schooled children.

Improving student achievement is the overarching goal in the Ministry and in all parts of the education system. To support this goal, the Ministry is committed to providing greater local autonomy to school boards, better accountability measures, the infrastructure that enables a new range of choice for parents, students and staff and a less directive system of education funding.

More autonomy for school boards will mean that the ministry will eliminate unnecessary regulations and allow boards to do their work with as few strings attached as possible. It will also allow them to be more responsive to their communities and give them freer rein to explore entrepreneurial options.

Better accountability measures will include individual accountability agreements with each school board and plans for improvement to be developed by each school and school board. Schools, school boards and the Ministry will monitor their progress towards improving student performance and will report these results to parents and the community.

Involvement of parents and the wider community is critical to the success of the K-12 education system. Satisfaction surveys will be administered in 2002 and will enable schools, school boards and the Ministry to monitor satisfaction levels of parents, students and staff in the education system.

And finally, a new multi-year funding system is being developed and will be implemented for September 2002. The system will be population-based, understandable, stable, transparent and comprehensive.

Planning Context

Examination of the external and internal environments helps to identify those factors that are likely to affect the conduct and success of education in British Columbia. A summary of observations is presented here.

The social and economic environment influences the system's operation and effectiveness. Factors such as the number and location of students, provincial funding levels, workplace requirements, special needs of children and the level of support that the public is willing to provide to K-12 education all affect the operation and performance of the education system.

Summary of Observations:

- Province-wide, school enrolment will decline slightly over the next five years. The decline is expected to take place in rural regions, while urban regions of the lower mainland can expect modest increases.
- The Aboriginal population in British Columbia is young and growing at a faster rate than the non-Aboriginal population.
- The number of children identified with special needs in British Columbia is growing, notably children requiring intensive and expensive interventions.
- Although there is not a province-wide problem, modest teacher supply problems exist in some districts, particularly in remote locations and in some subject areas.
- Working parents are requesting that schools provide or link to additional services such as pre-school and full-day kindergarten. In addition, research studies indicating the importance of early development in a child's school success are becoming widely known. Such factors are creating pressure to provide pre-school programs.
- Immigration, primarily from Asian countries, has created a need for English as a Second Language (ESL) services in several districts.
- British Columbia's students perform well compared to other Canadian and international jurisdictions.
- Schools do not perform well in serving some groups — Aboriginal students are the most visible example, but males and children from poor families also fare relatively poorly in schools across the province.
- The number of students who are eligible for university education exceeds the number of available spaces in British Columbia universities.
- Admission of British Columbia students to colleges and technical schools has increased significantly in the last decade.
- An aging workforce means there are fewer young people available to meet employers' demands.
- The trend in the high-tech sector is expansion, and therefore there will be a long-term requirement for employees with specific technical and computer skills. Across many occupations, technological advances necessitate higher levels of employee skill, even in entry-level positions.
- The service industry continues to be the main employer in BC. Many students are entering this sector directly from Grade 12.

Ministry Goals[1]

1. Improved student achievement.
2. Responsible citizens who contribute to a competitive and growing economy.
3. A top-notch, performance-oriented education system.
4. Parity of achievement for all students, regardless of their ethnic origin, gender, geographic location, physical characteristics or socio-economic status.

The following tables identify, for each goal, the objectives and strategies that the Ministry intends to undertake in 2002/03.

The strategies presented are anticipated to persist through the three-year period covered by this Service Plan (2002/03 - 2004/05). Associated performance measures are identified. Human and financial resources devoted to the Ministry's activities in the next three years are indicated in the last section in this plan.

Evidence of system performance will be noticeable in the period covered by this plan but efforts must be sustained over the long term to achieve the goals.

Goal 1 — Improved student achievement.

Objective 1:

To improve student performance in areas of intellectual development

Strategies

1. Establish standards.
2. Collect information.
3. Monitor performance.
4. Identify and report areas of low performance.
5. Undertake initiatives intended to improve performance (e.g. encourage school boards to provide flexibility and choice to parents and students, deregulation, increase school board autonomy).

Performance Measures:

- Percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on Foundation Skills Assessment.
- School completion rate (percentage of students who start Grade 8 and graduate from Grade 12 within 6 years).
- Grade 8-9 transition rate.
- Percentage of students with 'C' or better in Grade 12 courses.
- Percentage of Grade 12 students receiving scholarships.

Data for the above measures will be provincial and school district averages.

[1] A note on targets. The Ministry knows from past experience that small, steady improvement is possible on most measures of performance. It expects that the rate of improvement can be improved, but wishes to avoid setting arbitrary numerical targets which the system does not know how to achieve.

Goal 2 — Responsible citizens who contribute to a competitive and growing economy.

Objective 1:	Objective 2:
To improve student achievement in career development	To improve student achievement in areas of human and social development
Strategies	
1. Establish standards. 2. Collect information. 3. Monitor performance. 4. Identify and report areas of low performance. 5. Undertake initiatives intended to improve performance (e.g. encourage school boards to provide flexibility and choice to parents and students, deregulation, increase school board autonomy).	
Performance Measures:	**Performance Measures:**
■ School completion rate. ■ Percentage of students making transitions to work and/or post-secondary education.	■ Percentage of students in agreement with statements reflective of socially responsible behaviour, such as community mindedness, valuing diversity, and a sense of self-worth.
Data for the above measures will be provincial and school district averages.	

Goal 3 — A top-notch performance-oriented education system.

Objective 1:

To establish the infrastructure needed to focus the education system on student achievement

Strategies

1. Provide information about student performance.
2. Focus the role of school boards on student achievement.
3. Provide opportunities for increased parental involvement in schools.
4. Provide a less directive funding system.
5. Set standards for maintenance of school facilities and curriculum currency.
6. With the Chief Information Officer, enhance the technological infrastructure of BC schools.

Performance Measures:

- Percentage of parents who report they can play a meaningful role in their children's school.
- Percentage of students that feel their school is helping improve their computer skills.
- Percentage of education partners who report that the funding system is understandable, transparent and comprehensive.
- Proportion of curriculum documents older than 5 years.
- Proportion of buildings with life expectancy under 10 years.

Objective 2:

To improve and maintain student, parent and teacher support for the K-12 education system

Strategies

1. Administer satisfaction surveys to monitor levels of teacher, student and parental satisfaction.
2. Identify areas with low levels of satisfaction.
3. Encourage school boards to create strategies to improve teacher, parent and student satisfaction.
4. Improve communications using electronic media.

Performance Measures:

- Percentage of students satisfied with their school and education.
- Percentage of parents satisfied with their child's school and education.
- Percentage of school staff satisfied with their school.
- Number of visits to Ministry Web sites.

Objective 3:

To reduce burdensome and/or inefficient regulations in Ministry policy and legislation

Strategies

1. Identify and eliminate "dumb rules".
2. Review all Ministry policy and legislation for inefficiencies.
3. Eliminate or rewrite policy or legislation to reflect increased school board autonomy.

Performance Measures:

- Proportion of deregulation completed.
- Satisfaction of school boards with their ability to manage effectively.

Objective 4:

To perform at a high level in comparison to other jurisdictions

Strategies

1. Participate in national and international surveys of student achievement.

Performance Measures:

- British Columbia's standing on national and international assessments.

Objective 5:

To build an open, performance-oriented culture inside the Ministry

Strategies

1. Align the responsibilities of Ministry staff with the core services.
2. Enhance data collection to enable performance reporting.
3. Communicate business plans and strategies within the Ministry.
4. Measure effectiveness of information technology resources to meet performance goals.
5. Communicate with the field about improving student achievement.

Performance Measures:

- Percentage of Ministry staff who feel they are contributing to improving performance in the system.
- Percentage of district staff who feel that the Ministry is focused on improving student achievement.

Objective 6:

To build a performance-oriented culture within each school district

Strategies

1. Monitor student level performance by school district.
2. Deputy Minister and superintendents to identify areas of improvement for student achievement in each school district annually.
3. Provide performance data to the school board to assist them in improving student achievement.
4. School boards review school plans to ensure that every school is focused on student achievement.

Performance Measures:

- Percentage of Superintendents who have implemented accountability agreements.
- Percentage of school boards meeting the obligations in their accountability contracts.

Goal 4 — Parity of achievement for all students regardless of their ethnic origin, gender, geographic location, physical characteristics, or socio-economic status.

Objective 1:

To reduce inequalities among students in terms of their ability to meet the goals of education

Strategies

1. Establish standards.
2. Collect information.
3. Monitor performance.
4. Identify and report areas of low performance.
5. Undertake initiatives intended to improve performance (e.g. provide flexibility and choice to parents and students, deregulation, increase school board autonomy).

Performance Measures:

- Percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on FSA, by equity group.
- School completion rate (percentage of students who start Grade 8 and graduate from Grade 12 within 6 years), by equity group.
- Grade 8 - 9 transition rate, by equity group.
- Percentage of students with 'C' or better in Grade 12 courses, by equity group.
- Percentage of Grade 12 students receiving scholarships, by equity group.
- Percentage of students making transition to post-secondary and/or work, by equity group.
- Percentage of students in agreement with statements reflective of socially responsible behaviour (e.g. community mindedness, valuing diversity, a sense of self-worth), by equity group.

Data for the above measures will be presented as provincial and school district averages.

Consistency with Government's Priorities

Education is a top priority of the government as outlined in the *New Era* document and in the Premier's service agreement letter to the Minister. The education system is also an essential element in support of three other government priorities: safer streets and schools in every community; better services for children, families and First Nations; and responsible, accountable management of British Columbians' public resources and tax dollars.

Government's Priorities Related to the Ministry

- A top-notch education system for students of all ages
- Safer streets and schools in every community
- Better services for children, families and First Nations
- Responsible, accountable management of British Columbians' public resources and tax dollars

Ministry Goals

- Improved student achievement.
- Responsible citizens who contribute to a competitive and growing economy
- A top-notch, performance-oriented education system.
- Parity of achievement for all students, regardless of their ethnic origin, gender, geographic location, physical characteristics or socio-economic status.

Ministry Strategies Focus on Five Key Areas

- Achievement: focusing the attention of the entire education system on continuous improvement of students' educational outcomes
- Accountability: ensuring effectiveness and efficiency at all levels of the system
- Autonomy: allowing school boards to determine how they will reach their goals, but holding them to account for achieving those goals
- Choice: removing barriers to flexibility and choice for school boards, parents and students
- Funding: develop an understandable, transparent, comprehensive population-based funding formula for school districts

Deregulation

The Ministry of Education is fully committed to fulfilling the government's *New Era* promise of reducing "red tape" and the regulatory burden by one-third within three years.

The primary purpose of the Ministry's regulatory reform will be to support the Minister's strategic direction of accountability, achievement, autonomy, choice and a more comprehensible funding system. Following the 2001 Core Services Review and the realignment of Ministry priorities, the Ministry will immediately begin to implement its deregulation plan establishing best practices.

By 2004-2005, the Ministry will have eliminated or modified regulations, policies and other Ministry operating procedures and practices that limit school boards from effectively responding to the educational needs of students.

Resource Summary

The following table summarizes resource allocation and reflects fiscal plans for 2002/03 and 2003/04 that achieve the 2004/05 fiscal targets provided to our Ministry. Following the table is a high level overview of the Ministry's Information Resource Management Plan (IRMP) and Human Resource Management Plans (HRMP).

Summary Expenditure Plan

Core Businesses	2001/02 Restated Estimates	2002/03 Estimates	2003/04 Plan	2004/05 Plan
Operating Expenditures ($000)				
Public Schools	4,094,412	4,089,982	4,079,430	4,071,246
Independent Schools	152,460	156,828	159,420	162,849
Debt Service and Amortization	543,900	564,030	575,000	580,900
K-12 Education Programs	32,593	32,210	29,475	28,650
Management Services	18,629	18,031	17,769	17,449
Total	4,841,994	4,861,081	4,861,094	4,861,094
FTEs				
	366	353	342	328
Consolidated Capital Plan ($000)				
Public Schools	305,000	265,800	170,950	123,900
Independent Schools	-	-	-	-
Debt Service and Amortization	-	-	-	-
K-12 Education Programs	-	-	-	-
Management Services	-	-	-	-
Total	305,000	265,800	170,950	123,900
Ministry Capital (Consolidated Revenue Fund) ($000)				
Public Schools	-	-	-	-
Independent Schools	-	-	-	-
Debt Service and Amortization	-	-	-	-
K-12 Education Programs	4,278	3,306	3,106	2,106
Management Services	1,519	670	670	670
Total	5,797	3,976	3,776	2,776

Information Resource Management Plan

The Ministry's current Information Resource Management Plan is focused on improvement of decision support, reducing the burden of data collection on schools and districts, integrating a number of related systems and providing the education system with equitable access to educational content.

Major Projects

1. Information Systems Plan Implementation

The Information Systems Plan (ISP) is the four-year plan approved by Treasury Board ($12M) to develop new information systems for the Ministry's use. The project, started January 2001, has established plans for developing:

- Easy access to information for Ministry staff. Access could be expanded to include appropriate use by education partners.
- Improved software applications and primary information registries.
- Systems that improve staff productivity by incorporating business rules.
- Web-based applications for electronic service delivery.

The current ISP applies only to Ministry systems. Greater effectiveness and efficiencies in meeting *New Era* commitments are possible if Ministry applications are integrated with school and school district systems.

2. The Provincial Learning Network

The Provincial Learning Network (PLNet) is the largest geographically dispersed, centrally managed data communications network in North America. PLNet service is provided to all public schools. Currently, it serves 1895 schools and related facilities, 135 college campuses, institutes and agencies in about 325 communities. The network provides equitable and secure access to education resources across the province. The shared infrastructure is based on SPAN/BC, which connects an additional 2500 government sites.

Summary of IRMP

The *New Era* directions of student achievement, choice, flexibility, and accountability are requiring that the Ministry evaluate and adjust it's current monitoring system, which includes data collection, analysis and reporting. As inadequacies in the current monitoring system are identified, solutions will be implemented to ensure that the Ministry is able to provide information that supports the government's directions to school administrators, parents and students in an efficient and timely manner.

Human Resource Management Plan

In the Ministry's 2002/03 Human Resource Management Plan, there is a significant focus on two areas: the Ministry as a learning organization orientated around core business areas and workforce adjustment. The plan submitted to PSERC includes performance measures for each of the goals and objectives presented below. Some of these performance measures will be used to report on the Ministry's success in meeting Goal 3, Objective 5 of this Service Plan.

Goals	Objectives	Strategies
Employee Learning A culture within the Ministry that supports continuous learning.	• Identify the key Executive principles and long-term commitments to enhance the employee learning culture. • Develop both skilled managers who provide strong leadership and informed employees who take ownership of and make contributions to continual learning.	• Increase employee access to and availability of development and job skill opportunities. • Continue to develop and conduct a core competency program for managers including (but not limited to) change management and leadership skills training.
Workforce Adjustment A realigned workforce focused around the Ministry's core activities.	• Identify the workforce adjustment and organizational impacts of budget and core review. • Ensure the workforce adjustment process occurs consistent with identified key principles and existing collective agreement.	• Participate in the workforce adjustment process as coordinated by PSERC over the next three years. • Develop a communication plan, which includes regular and timely communication with all levels of staff and their designated representatives.
Public Service Renewal Renew, revitalize and sustain a professional public service workforce within the Ministry.	• Enhance management leadership. • Emphasize learning and development. • Establish and maintain a work place where employees feel motivated, supported and valued. • Update HR policies and practices via Shared Services concept.	• Develop a learning plan to support core business. • Conduct performance management reviews. • Re-emphasise employee recognition. • Prepare competency and succession information for key positions. • Plan and coordinate transition toward human resources shared services concept.
Diversity A diverse and representative workforce.	• Ensure a workforce that is aware of and reflects the diversity within the BC population.	• Ensure employment and advancement systems are bias free and merit based. • Promote workplace awareness and appreciation for diversity within work units and among clients served.

Appendix 1. Summary of Measures and Targets

A. Student achievement (results reported for all students combined and by equity groups)

1. Percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) (Target: increase)
2. School completion rate (percentage of students who start Grade 8 and graduate from Grade 12 within 6 years) (Target: increase)
3. Grade 8 - 9 transition rate (Target: maintain)
4. Percentage of students with a 'C' or better in Grade 12 courses (Target: increase)
5. Percentage of Grade 12 students receiving scholarships (Target: increase)
6. Percentage of students making transitions to work and/or post-secondary education (Baseline)
7. Percentage of students in agreement with statements reflective of socially responsible behaviour such as community mindedness, valuing diversity, and a sense of self-worth (Baseline)
8. British Columbia's standing on national and international assessments (Target: no jurisdiction has better results than BC)

B. Infrastructure

1. Percentage of parents who report they can play a meaningful role in their children's school (Baseline)
2. Percentage of students that feel their school is helping improve their computer skills (Baseline)
3. Number of visits to Ministry Web sites (as indication of improved communication through electronic media (Baseline)
4. Percentage of education partners who report that the funding system is understandable, transparent and comprehensive (Baseline)
5. Proportion of curriculum documents that are older than 5 years (Target: 0)
6. Proportion of existing buildings with life expectancy less than 10 years (Target: 15%)

C. Satisfaction

1. Percentage of students satisfied with their school and education (Baseline)
2. Percentage of parents satisfied with their child's school and education (Baseline)
3. Percentage of school staff satisfied with their school (Baseline)

D. Deregulation

1. Proportion of deregulation completed (Target: by 2004, 1/3 of deregulation complete)
2. Satisfaction of school boards with their ability to manage effectively (Target: 100%)

E. Performance-oriented system

1. Percentage of Ministry staff who feel they are contributing to improving performance in the system (Baseline)
2. Percentage of district staff who feel that the Ministry is focused on improving student achievement (Baseline)
3. Percentage of superintendents who have implemented accountability contracts (Target: 100%)
4. Percentage of school boards fulfilling the obligations of their accountability agreements (Target: 100%)